

**REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS AND PROPOSALS**

**GENERAL LEGAL AND CIVIL COUNSEL SERVICES**

**Grand Traverse County**



Proposal due:  
January 5, 2023

Issued by:

Grand Traverse County  
Administration  
Nate Alger, County Administrator  
400 Boardman Avenue  
Traverse City, MI 49684

**Request for Qualifications & Proposals  
General Legal and Civil Counsel Services  
Grand Traverse County, Michigan**

**Overview**

Grand Traverse County is requesting proposals from Michigan law firms to provide general legal services as the County's civil counsel. The County's civil counsel will be appointed by the Board of Commissioners. The County civil counsel also serves as an advisor to other elected officials, department heads and staff within the County organization in relation to their respective duties.

The Prosecuting Attorney has acted as civil counsel and provided general legal services for several years, but no longer can serve in this capacity. The County also utilizes, and will continue to utilize, the services of different law firms to provide specialized services, such as bond counsel, labor/employment matters, real estate matters, and matters involving economic development incentive programs.

The Board of Commissioners will be responsible for the selection and appointment of civil counsel. The Board of Commissioners will enter a contract with a qualified law firm to act as civil counsel, which will be responsible to provide the general legal services described in Appendix A.

The County will not be responsible for any costs incurred by any firm to respond to this request. Firms who wish to submit proposals must provide the information outlined in the enclosed Legal Services Qualifications and Pricing Appendixes by January 5, 2023. Five (5) copies of the response must be provided in a sealed envelope clearly marked "General Legal and Civil Counsel Services Request for Qualifications" by **January 5, 2023, 4:00 p.m. EST**, at which time the submittals will be publicly opened. Proposals should be submitted to:

Grand Traverse County  
Attention County Administrator  
400 Boardman Avenue  
Traverse City MI 49684

The tentative timeline is:

<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Target Date</b>
RFQ posted	December 5, 2022
Proposals due	January 5, 2023
Interviews	January 12, 2023
Negotiations on engagement and contract terms	January 23, 2023
Recommendation to the Board of Commissioners	February 1, 2023
Contract executed and start of services	Immediately after Board of Commissioners approval

The County may conduct inquiries and request additional information from firms as the County deems necessary to assist in the evaluation of any proposal. The County Administrator and a review committee will make a recommendation to the Board of Commissioners for a contract with the selected firm. The County expects an initial contract term beginning immediately after the Board of Commissioners approve the contract.

The County reserves the right to select the firm with legal services that best meets the needs for the County in the sole judgement of the County and selection will be based on experience, qualifications and /or economic benefit to the County. This selection will most likely not be based solely on cost.

To maintain fairness in the process, inquiries concerning this RFP, including questions related to technical issues, are directed through email to the following contact.

**Contact:** Nate Alger  
**Title:** County Administrator  
**Email:** [nalger@gtcountymi.gov](mailto:nalger@gtcountymi.gov)

All questions concerning the RFP must reference the RFP section heading; queries and responses will be posted to the County's website. Questions over the phone will not be accepted,

The County will accept inquiries or requests for clarification until December 29, 2022, 4:00 pm EST.

Answers may be changed or withdrawn before the deadline for proposals. All such changes and withdrawals must be submitted in writing and received by the County before the deadline for submissions

### **Minimum Qualifications**

The primary attorney to be designated as civil counsel and assigned to work on County general legal matters shall, at a minimum, possess the following:

1. A juris doctorate degree from an American Bar Association accredited law school.
2. A valid and active license to practice law in the State of Michigan.
3. A minimum of five (5) years-experience in municipal law, with an emphasis on Michigan County legal issues.
4. Referrals from 3 municipal clients (preferring Michigan Counties) that worked directly with the primary attorney.

### **Information about the County**

Grand Traverse County is the largest county in northwest lower Michigan. The County has a current population of approximately 96,000. Grand Traverse County is considered a Michigan municipal corporation formed and operated pursuant to Michigan Public Act No. 156 of 1851, the County Board of Commissioners Act. An elected nine-member Board of Commissioners serves as the governing body. The Board of Commissioners appoints a County Administrator who manages the day-to-day operations of the County and serves as a coordinator for the elected County officials, including the Treasurer, Clerk, Register of Deeds, Drain Commissioner,

Sheriff, and Prosecuting Attorney. Grand Traverse County also serves as the funding unit for the 13th Circuit Court, Probate Court, and the 86<sup>th</sup> District Court. The County employs over 500 employees and provides various programs and services, including public health, emergency management, facilities management, central dispatch, parks, and recreation, veteran services, and construction-related permitting and inspections. More information about Grand Traverse County can be found at the County's website at <https://www.gtcountymi.gov>.

DRAFT

#### **Appendix A** **Scope of General Legal and Civil Counsel Services**

The firm shall provide all administrative and support necessary to manage the workload in order to complete all assignments. This includes office facilities, support staff, legal research, supplies and equipment. The County anticipates the proposals will identify a primary County

Attorney who completes the general counsel matters and maintains the centralized responsibility for coordinating other attorneys and support staff.

The scope of services may include, but not limited to the following:

1. Draft and/or review all ordinances, agreements, memoranda of understanding, and similar documents.
2. Participate in non-labor negotiations when requested.
3. Draft and/or review all County ordinances or amendments.
4. Assist the County in the sale or purchase of property.
5. Prepare deeds and other contracts for the sale and purchase of property.
6. Prepare formal opinions on the legal ramifications and implications of matters before the County, as requested by the County Administrator or the Board of Commissioners.
7. Provide legal advice on actions taken or contemplated.
8. Recommend motions, resolutions, and other actions to the Board of Commissioners when appropriate or requested.
9. Attend Board of Commissioners meetings when requested.
10. Prepare various legal documents required by the County.
11. Represent the County, when requested in various administrative proceedings before State agencies.
12. Advise appropriate officials on policy affecting the enforcement of all County ordinances or policies. Consult with the County Administrator or an appropriate designee on all policies.
13. Provide monthly detailed invoices to the County's Finance Director for work performed under the general legal counsel negotiated rate.
14. Prepare and/or review ballot language as requested by the County.
15. Possible legal representation of the County as either a plaintiff or defendant in or out of a court of law

**Appendix B**  
**General Legal Services Request for Qualifications**

1. Firm Name
  - a. Area of specialty.
  - b. Years in businesses.

- c. Number of Michigan Counties that you routinely provide services for.
2. Offices
  - a. Office location where majority of work will be performed.
  - b. Name and address of parent firm (if applicable).
3. Personnel
  - a. Principal contact (name, phone number(s) and e-mail) of the firm. (Answers to questions received from prospective respondents to this RFQ will be emailed to the address provided).
  - b. Proposed personnel for legal services to be provided for each discipline. Please provide the specific name of the individual who will handle each discipline and attach a current resume.
  - c. Other key personnel names who will be used for County businesses.
  - d. Total number of licensed attorneys at the office listed in 2a. above.
  - e. Total number of all staff at the office listed in 2a. above.
4. Does firm have adequate staff to handle another municipal client or will staff need to be hired?
5. Experience – provide a short narrative (no more than 2-3 pages) detailing experience in municipal law, specifically Michigan county law, including area of expertise. Be sure to include any information on items identified as services in Appendix A as well.
6. List of specific reasons (no more than 1 page) detailing why your firm should be considered by Grand Traverse County for legal representation.
7. Provide three (3) or more municipal references from prior or current clients, including all contact information. Preference will be given to Michigan County clients.
8. Disclosure of any current clients or interests that may reasonably be foreseen to constitute a conflict of interest when representing the County (such as other local governments, developers, bidders, etc.).
9. Provide evidence of a comprehensive liability and workers compensation insurance policy for all staff assigned to work for the County.
10. Note any exceptions or deviations to the required scope of services outlined in Appendix A.
11. During the past five (5) years has the firm had any Bar Association complaints filed against it? If so, please explain.
12. Has the firm been in bankruptcy, reorganization, or receivership in the last five (5) years?

13. Has the firm been terminated by any municipal client in the past five (5) years? If so, please explain.
14. Define the standard time frames for responses by the County Attorney to inquiries by the County Administrator, Board of Commissioners, department head etc.
15. Describe how your firm would familiarize yourself with the current issues facing Grand Traverse County.

DRAFT

**Appendix C**  
**Legal Service Request for Pricing**

1. Monthly General Counsel Retainer \$ \_\_\_\_\_
2. Hourly rate for Specialty Services Provided \$ \_\_\_\_\_
3. Listing all other expenses charged outside of the above fee:

1. \$ \_\_\_\_\_
2. \$ \_\_\_\_\_
3. \$ \_\_\_\_\_
4. \$ \_\_\_\_\_
5. \$ \_\_\_\_\_

DRAFT